



### Feed Yard Operator Credited For Working To Improve Beef Industry Profitability

Warren Weibert, a 1969 graduate of Kansas State University, was recently honored as the 2013 K-State Animal Sciences & Industry Distinguished Alumnus.

Growing up on a family farm near Durham, Weibert insisted: "Cattle have been my life. I've always known feeding cattle was what I wanted to do."

Since 1977, Weibert and his wife, Carol, have operated Decatur County Feed Yard in northwest Kansas near Oberlin. Over the years, it has grown from an 18,000 to 40,000-head capacity operation with 130 active ranch customers from throughout the country.

A regular advertiser on 580 WIBW, sponsoring Farm Profit Seminars and the Beef Producers Seminar, Decatur County Feed Yard is a family business.

"We have three main principles," Weibert said. "Ranchers retain ownership of their cattle through the feed yard, while we manage and market those cattle as individuals, with comprehensive performance data provided to the ranchers."

"My goal is and always will be to work for the producer and to help cow-calf operations improve their long-term profitability, and gain more control over their cattle's performance," Weibert emphasized.

While it is strong communication that allows his feed yard to be efficient and successful, Weibert said the automation and electronics used in the feed yard are what sets it apart from other cattle feeding operations around the country. "You cannot manage what you do not measure," he contended.

In 1994, Decatur County Feed Yard implemented an electronic cattle management system, which allows tracking an individual animal from the time it arrives at the feed yard through the packing plant.

An electronic ear tag attached to cattle upon arrival at the feed yard automatically documents production data. Each animal is individually measured using ultrasound, video imaging and electronic scales to determine back fat, frame score, weight and projected feed efficiency.

"When cattle are ready for market, they are sorted into market groups, and valued individually according to a value-based grid. This allows producers to be paid based on the value of their beef, not the commodity price set by the market,"



Weibert confirmed.

After cattle are sold, individual reports are sent to the producers. Data reflects the merit of each animal, including the dollar value, feed efficiency, quality grade, and additional economical information, listed from highest to lowest net return.

"With this information, ranchers can improve their herd and begin genetic advancement to have more control over their future revenues," explained Weibert, shown in this K-State photo speaking to an animal science class about the feed yard industry.



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